

Innovate India

Invites Entries for

A Story Writing Challenge-2026

“मेरी एक कहानी”

Guidelines for Participants

Every Experience Has a Story

The purpose of “मेरी एक कहानी” is not simply to identify people who can write well. It is to encourage children, young people and adults to **remember one meaningful experience from their lives, reflect upon it, and express it creatively through a story.**

You do not have to write your entire life story—just one story that has stayed with you.

1. What Can Your Story Be About?

You may choose **one real experience, incident, episode or moment** from your life as the basis of your story. Your story could be about:

- A **small achievement**
- A **failure and what you learned from it**
- A **mistake** that taught you something
- A **challenge** you faced
- An experience of **helping someone or receiving help**
- Inspiration received from a **teacher, friend or family member**
- A **new idea or small innovation**
- An experience related to **nature, animals, birds or the environment**
- A **funny or unusual incident**
- A moment that **changed the way you think**
- An experience that you still remember
- Or any other **meaningful episode** from your life.

Remember: The incident does not have to be big. It simply needs to have meaning for you.

2. What Should You NOT Write?

This is not a programme for writing your **autobiography or entire life story**. You should not write on the topics like “My Life from Childhood to the Present” or “My Education and Achievements” or “A long list of events.”

Instead, you may **Choose any one incident of your life and**

- ✓ Describe that incident meaningfully
- ✓ Tell us what you felt
- ✓ Tell us what you did
- ✓ Share what you learned from it

3. An Easy Way to Find Your Story

Ask yourself, have you ever...

- Failed at something and tried again?
- Helped someone or received unexpected help?
- Made a mistake that taught you an important lesson?

- *Done something for the first time?*
- *Remembered something a teacher or another person said to you?*
- *Had an experience that made you particularly happy?*
- *Seen a problem and tried to find a solution?*
- *Had a special experience with nature, animals or birds?*
- *Experienced something small that changed the way you think?*

If your answer to any of these is “Yes”, you may already have your “मेरी एक कहानी”.

4. A Simple Structure for Your Story

You may use this 5-Step Story Formula:

- ① **Beginning** — **What happened?** Where and when did the incident happen? What was the situation?
- ② **The Experience** — **What was special?** What challenge, event or situation arose?
- ③ **Your Response** — **What did you do?** How did you respond?
- ④ **The Outcome** — **What happened next?** How did the situation end?
- ⑤ **The Learning** — **What did you learn?** What did the experience teach you or how did it change you?

5. What Makes a Good Story?



Originality: The story should be your own.



Observation : Notice and describe meaningful details of the experience.



Emotion : Express what you felt.



Reflection: Think about what the experience meant to you.



Learning : Share what you gained from the experience.



Expression : Present the experience in an interesting and natural way.

6. Some Examples For You

6.1 A Small Failure, A Big Lesson

Title: My First Failure

A child prepared a model for the school's science exhibition for the first time. He worked on it for several days, but on the day of the exhibition, the model did not work. He was disappointed and felt that all his effort had been wasted. His teacher said, “**A failed model is not your failure; it is the beginning of your next experiment.**” The child went home and rebuilt the model. He discovered that he had made a small mistake in connecting the wires. At the next exhibition, his model worked successfully.

Possible message: Failure can be a beginning for learning, not an end.

6.2 A Small Act of Help

Title: Five Minutes of Help

A student was waiting at a bus stop to go to school. He noticed an elderly person trying to cross the road while carrying heavy bags. The student spent a few minutes helping him. The elderly person simply said, “**You made my task easier today.**” The student went to school, but he kept thinking about that small incident throughout the day. He realised that helping someone does not always require doing something big.

Possible message: A small act of kindness can make someone's day better.

6.3 A Small Idea

Title: The Classroom Waste Box

A student noticed that small pieces of paper were often lying on the classroom floor. He suggested making a small **paper-waste box** from an old carton. Initially, only two students used it. Gradually, the entire class began using it. After a few weeks, the students noticed that their classroom was much cleaner.

Possible message: A small idea can become the beginning of change.

6.4 A Funny Incident

Title: The Day I Gave a Speech

A student had to give a speech at school. He had practised several times at home. But the moment he reached the stage, he forgot his opening sentence. For a few seconds, he stood silently. Then he smiled and said, **“It seems my first sentence has gone on holiday without me!”** The entire hall laughed. His fear disappeared, and he delivered the rest of his speech confidently.

Possible message: Humour and spontaneity can sometimes make difficult situations easier.

6.5 A Lesson from Nature

Title: The Bird at My Window

A child noticed a bird that visited his window every day. One day, he saw the bird repeatedly bringing small twigs and placing them in one particular spot. He observed it for several days and realised that the bird was building a nest. He understood that even this little bird was making repeated efforts without giving up.

Possible message: Nature can teach us patience and perseverance.

7. How to Make Your Story Interesting?

Do not simply write: “I went to school. There was a competition. I lost. I felt sad.”

Instead, bring the experience alive: “When my name was not called even for the third position, the trophy I had imagined holding suddenly disappeared from my thoughts. I quietly returned to my seat...”

This allows the reader to **experience the moment with you.**

Therefore, while writing, try to describe: **What did you see? What did you hear? What did you feel? What did you think? What did you do?**

8. How Can You Begin Your Story?

You may begin with an opening such as:

Opening 1: “That day, I had no idea that the next few minutes would change the way I thought.”

Opening 2: “I thought this would be very easy, but...”

Opening 3: “Even today, whenever I remember that incident, I smile.”

Opening 4: “I failed that day, but in reality, that was the day I learned something important.”

Opening 5: “It was a very small incident, but its impact on me was enormous.”

9. How Can You End Your Story?

Do not simply write that “the incident ended.” Help the reader understand **what the experience gave you.**

For example: “That day I realised that winning does not always mean receiving a prize. Sometimes, learning something new from a mistake is itself a great victory.”

10. What Should the Language Be Like?

- Keep the language **simple and natural.**
- Avoid unnecessarily difficult words.
- Use your everyday language creatively.
- Keep dialogues natural, wherever you use them.
- Short paragraphs make a story easier to read.

Most importantly, you do not need complicated language to write a good story.

11. Can AI Be Used?

The main purpose of “मेरी एक कहानी” is to bring out the participant's **own creativity, experience and expression.** Therefore, the **central experience and idea should be your own.** Do not have an AI tool generate the entire story and submit it as your own work. Digital tools may be used for minor proofreading or spelling correction. Your story should clearly reflect **your own voice.**

12. Prescribed Word Limits and Age Group

Group 1: 10–15 years (1000 words); Group 2: 16–20 years (1500 words);

Group 3: 21–30 years (2500 words); Group 4: 31 years and above (3000 words)

Language: Hindi or English. **Format:** Word / PDF. **One participant – One story**

13. The Title Matters

The title is the first attraction of a story. Therefore, for example, instead of writing “My Failure”, write “The Day I Lost and Still Won”. Similarly instead of writing “My Bird”, write “The Visitor at My Window.” A good title should create **curiosity** without revealing the entire story.

14. What Should You Avoid?

- A copied or AI Generated story or a story taken from the Internet
- Presenting someone else's story as your own
- Giving too much preaching or moralising
- Long descriptions unrelated to the main incident
- Merely listing achievements
- Overly complicated language
- Describing events without reflection or learning

15. Final “मेरी एक कहानी” Checklist

Before submitting, ask yourself:

- ☐ Is this **my own story**?
- ☐ Have I chosen **one main incident/experience**?
- ☐ Does my story have a beginning, main event and ending?
- ☐ Have I described my feelings and thoughts?
- ☐ Is the impact or learning from the experience clear?
- ☐ Is the title interesting?
- ☐ Have I followed the word limit?
- ☐ Have I provided my name, age and other required details separately?

16. Kindly Provide the following with Your Story

1. Your self-certificate that the story has been written by you.
2. Some documents showing your date of birth to confirm the group that you have applied for.
3. Your Complete address for communication.
4. Your contact number and email ID
5. Your profession and Your qualification
6. If You are a Student, write the name of your class School

The Most Important Message

You do not have to be a great writer to participate in “मेरी एक कहानी.”

You only need to present a moment from your life that mattered to you **honestly, creatively and in your own words**. It may be **A small incident...**, **A real experience...**, **A story...** and perhaps, a great inspiration for someone else.

Remember Every Experience Has a Story.

Write any one story of your life and send it to

Coordinator, Meri Ek Kahani, through email at meriekkahani2026@gmail.com

Last date is 31st October, 2026

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